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ON THE  
PROLONGATION  
OF THE  
SLAVE TRADE.

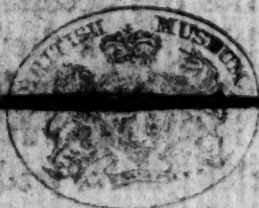
A Moral Essay, set forth in the following Dialogue.

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By JAMES MAXWELL, Poet in PAISLEY.

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46-7-4-704  
"Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad." Eccl. vii. 7.



ON THE  
SLAVE TRADE.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

**W**E must confess we have done wrong,  
And have a trade continu'd long,  
Offensive both to God and man:  
But, gracious Heav'n, indulge us still  
A little longer in this ill,  
Then we'll forsake it if we can.

For if this trade we now should leave,  
And no more Africans enslave,  
We fear 'twill be a dreadful loss:  
For our West-India planters they  
Will sore lament the fatal day,  
That would their avarice so cross.

WEST-INDIA PLANTERS.

- 3 Ye British Legislators, pray,  
Consider what we have to say,  
And not too rashly now proceed:  
We have a Charter you must know,  
Granted an hundred years ago,  
Consider this is law indeed.
- 4 King Charles the Second, it appears,  
Gave us this grant a thousand years,  
And ther'fore justly 'tis our due:  
For there is but one hundred run,  
Since we this gainful trade begun,  
Nine hundred more are yet t' ensue.

## HUMAN REASON.

- 5 But who gave Charles, or any King,  
 A right to grant you such a thing?  
 Was he supreme o'er God and all?  
 Could he retain his mortal breath,  
 And bid defiance ev'n to death,  
 And stay beyond his Sov'reign call?
- 6 Then could he bind posterity,  
 Still to sustain his curs'd decree  
 Who gave to him that mighty pow'r?  
 And is this all the right you have,  
 Your fellow-creatures to enslave,  
 And even their mortal lives devour?
- 7 Your arguments are wholly vain;  
 Nor have you reason to complain,  
 Tho' now you lose your hellish trade:  
 Whatever loss you may be at,  
 No man of sense can pity that,  
 Since ye the rights of man invade.

## HOUSE OF LORDS.

- 8 But let us all consider well,  
 Tho' we should all be doom'd to hell,  
 We must not our West-Indies lose;  
 Should we leave off this gainful trade,  
 Our neighbours by it would be made,  
 And that is what we must refuse.



- 9 For we have got much wealth thereby,  
 Then notwithstanding all the cry,  
 We will support the fav'rite cause;  
 For sugar's sweet, and money's sweeter,  
 Altho' the threaten'd end be bitter,  
 What need we care for clam'rous jaws?

## CONSCIENCE.

- 10 Then pray continue to rebel,  
 Tho' you miss heav'n you're sure of hell,  
 Then pray pursue your cursed trade.  
 But I shall then appear your foe  
 And rack you with eternal woe,  
 Tho' me, nor God, nor hell you dread.

## THE DEVIL.

- 11 Ye spiritual and temporal Lords,  
 Regard not vain and empty words,  
 You have a good and noble cause:  
 Courageous be, and win the field,  
 And never to fanatics yield,  
 But still sustain my Charlie's laws.
- 12 If God and Conscience ye obey,  
 And fear what poor fanatics say,  
 You'll lose your honour and renown:  
 Consider you're exalted high,  
 Then never mind the feeble cry  
 Of poor fanatics, tho' they frown.

## HUMAN REASON.

- 13 But, O ye high exalted Lords,  
 If ye believe the devil's words,  
 Your honours soon will be brought low:

Consider he was once more high  
 Than you or your fraternity,  
 Yet he is sunk to hell you know.

- 14 And will you yet believe his lies,  
 And truth and conscience still despise,  
 Nor fear your great Creator's frown?  
 Then shall you quickly be brought low,  
 Like him, to everlasting woe,  
 And in his den with him lie down.

#### THE WORD OF GOD.

- 15 What profit shall a man obtain \*  
 Tho' he this spacious earth could gain,  
 Yet lose his own immortal soul?  
 Would he a gainer be thereby,  
 Tho' he exalted were so high,  
 That all were his from pole to pole?

- 16 Grant he had health and could enjoy  
 The whole without the least annoy,  
 And life prolong'd a thousand years:  
 What would his profit be at last,  
 To be to hell for ever cast,  
 To spend an endless life of tears?

- 17 How would he curse his folly then,  
 Amidst the black infernal den,  
 That he believ'd the devil's lies?  
 Gnawing his dire resentless chains,  
 Beset with never ceasing pains,  
 Cursing his fate with endless cries.

\* Matth. xvi. 26.

- 18 This certainly will be their fate,  
 Who act at such prepos't'rous rate,  
 Regardless of th' oppressed's cries :  
 Who disregard the word of God,  
 Nor tremble at his lifted rod,  
 But threats and promises despise.
- 19 And can ye think the people still  
 Will be obedient to your will,  
 And bear the burden of the state ?  
 When they are crush'd from day to day,  
 Beneath your proud imperious sway,  
 While ye go on at such a rate ?
- 20 What signifies your proclamation,  
 While ye remove no just occasion,  
 That causes people's discontent ?  
 Your threatenings will but irritate  
 Their minds against the pow'r of State  
 And make them on resistance bent.
- 21 Not all the policy of hell  
 Will then the people's tumults quell,  
 Unless you rule by wholesome laws :  
 For if you act as you have done,  
 And in prepos't'rous course go on,  
 You never can remove the cause.
- 22 Think not a military force,  
 Will make the people change their course,  
 Tho' threaten'd with such loud alarms :  
 No this will stand you in no stead,  
 If in this way you will proceed,  
 The soldiers will lay down their arms.



- 23 Oppression maketh wise men mad,  
 When just redress cannot be had,  
 By fore complaints and humble cries:  
 They will resolve to live or die,  
 Rather than pine in misery,  
 And all against oppressors rise.
- 24 Our King perhaps may find this case,  
 If he such counsellors embrace,  
 'Twill raise disturbance thro' the land,  
 Tho' fore against the people's wills,  
 But such proceedings threaten ill,  
 Justice is all that they demand.
- 25 But if we cannot this obtain,  
 The pow'r of arms will prove in vain  
 Each man hath but one life to lose,  
 And if to live in misery,  
 We rather will consent to die,  
 Sooner than slavery we'll chuse.
- 26 And when they have us all destroy'd  
 And laid the kingdom wholly void,  
 The king may reign himself alone:  
 He'll have no subjects to oppose,  
 And if he have no foreign foes  
 He may in peace possess the throne.

The POOR SLAVES.

- 27 We thought the British Parliament  
 Would now our slavery prevent  
 And let us all our lives enjoy:

But woful news at last are come,  
Which strike our hopes for ever dumb,  
They fill us all with dread annoy.

28 The cursed Aristocracy,  
Hath now prolong'd our slavery,  
We fear 'twill never have an end :  
If this be Christianity,  
Curs'd be it to eternity,  
And may they all to hell descend.

29 O cursed Aristocracy!  
Curs'd be it to eternity!  
The bane of nations far and near ;  
Their hearts are surely hard as steel,  
Or adamant, they never feel,  
And they have stop'd both eye and ear.

30 If they can wealth and pow'r enjoy,  
They care not how they men destroy,  
Nor have they thought of heaven or hell ;  
Well, since at these they make a mock,  
We hope their pow'r will soon be broke,  
And they in hell be forc'd to dwell.



F I N I S .

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